

Civil Air Patrol Oral History Interview

WNHC 21.85-1

MR. GEORGE L. BRUNNER

1 MARCH 1985



**NATIONAL HISTORICAL COMMITTEE
Headquarters CAP**

CIVIL AIR PATROL
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Interview

of

Mr. George L. Brunner

by

Captain Helenmerie Walker, CAP
and
Captain Frank S. Myers, CAP

Date: 1 March 1985
Location: Portland, Oregon





THE ASSOCIATION OF CIVIL AIR PATROL VETERANS, INC.

FOR THE WELFARE OF THE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS OF OUR CAP MEMBERS WHO SERVED ON ACTIVE DUTY

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS OFFICE: THRIFT HIGHWAY — P. O. Box 266, CHARLOTTE 1, N. C.

OFFICE OF
NATIONAL COMMANDER

11 April 1949

Dear Friend:



COASTAL
PATROL



LIAISON
PATROL



TOW TARGET
AND TRACKING



ARMY
COURIER



SEARCH AND
RESCUE

The enclosed Certificate of Honorable Service is unique in the history of this country. This is one of the reasons that this official recognition of your active duty status as a belligerent during World War II has been so long delayed. The fact that such a certificate had never before been issued most certainly would have been an insurmountable obstacle, except for the determined activities of General Beau and his staff at CAP National Headquarters. We who have been privileged to work with this group recognize in it a tremendous force for getting things done.

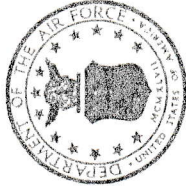
Many changes have occurred since the hectic days of the recent war, when the enemy was at our very shores. One such change has been the formation of an official CAP organization under a special Act of Congress. Under a separate Act of Congress, this organization has been made an official Air Force Auxiliary. In the critical years ahead, we are certain that CAP, under the type of leadership which it now has, is destined to play a very important part. To the extent that you can help in the current program of CAP, we urge your complete cooperation to the end that CAP will be ready when called upon again.

Sincerely,

R. E. Dawson Jr.
NATIONAL COMMANDER

RED:bwo

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE



CERTIFICATE OF HONORABLE SERVICE

BE IT KNOWN THAT

First Lieutenant George Tobis Pranner, E-2-40

SERVED WITH THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES DURING WORLD WAR II
AS AN ACTIVE DUTY MEMBER OF THE CIVIL AIR PATROL
(A VOLUNTEER CIVILIAN AUXILIARY OF THE ARMY AIR FORCES)

AS A

BELLIGERENT

AS DEFINED IN ANNEX TO HAGUE CONVENTION No. IV, OF OCTOBER 18, 1907

WASHINGTON, D. C.
15 MAY 1948

James H. Brown

MAJOR GENERAL, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
NATIONAL COMMANDER, CIVIL AIR PATROL

FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

May B. Vandenberg

CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

HEADQUARTERS AND HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON
CIVIL AIR PATROL - UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
Bolling Air Force Base, Washington 25, D. C.

11 April 1949

Dear CAP Member:

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I forward to you the long-awaited Certificate of Honorable Service for your wartime duty with Civil Air Patrol. I think you will agree with me that it is a worthwhile certificate, issued in recognition of worthwhile service.

Please bear in mind the fact that the rank indicated on the certificate was taken from records several years old. In many cases the rank is not indicated on these records. I felt that since this certificate was for wartime service, it should be issued on the basis of rank during that time.

I hope that you are still an interested active member of Civil Air Patrol. Through necessity the organization has changed somewhat from wartime days, but the same spirit of patriotic service is prevalent. If you have become inactive, why not contact your local CAP unit to find out what the present organization is doing and planning? You will find that CAP has a future, as well as a past.

You who receive this certificate are the foundation on which today's Civil Air Patrol was built; I am sure that we can depend on your continued support.

Sincerely yours,

Lucas V. Beau
LUCAS V. BEAU
Major General, USAF
National Commander

FOREWORD

The following is the transcript of an oral history interview recorded on magnetic tape. Since only minor emendations have been made, the reader should consistently bear in mind that he is reading a transcript of the spoken rather than the written word. Additionally, no attempt to confirm the historical accuracy of the statements has been made. As a result, the transcript reflects the interviewee's personal recollections of a situation as he remembered it at the time of the interview.

Editorial notes and additions made by CAH historians are enclosed in brackets. If feasible, first names, ranks, or titles are also provided. Any additions, deletions and changes subsequently made to the transcript by the interviewee are not indicated. Researchers may wish to listen to the actual interview tape prior to citing the transcript.

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

Mr. Brunner, in an appealing manner, tells us of his experiences at Southern Liaison Patrol Base No. 2 and Tow Target and Tracking at Fort Lewis, Washington.

His humility is very refreshing, - he presents himself as just one of the personnel there. The accounts of his experiences may be typical of CAP personnel at that time, and they make interesting vignettes.

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KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That I, George Brunner, have this day participated in an oral-magnetic-taped interview with Capt. William Wasker covering my best recollections of events and experiences which may be of historical significance to the Civil Air Patrol.

I understand that the tape(s) and the transcribed manuscript resulting therefrom will be accessioned into the Civil Air Patrol's Historial Holdings. In the best interest of the Civil Air Patrol, I do hereby voluntarily give, transfer, convey, and assign all right, title, and interest in the memoirs and remembrances contained in the aforementioned magnetic tapes and manuscript to the Civil Air Patrol, to have and to hold the same forever, hereby relinquishing for myself, my executors, administrators, heirs, and assigns all ownership, right, title, and interest therein to the donee expressly on the condition of strict observance of the following restrictions:

George L Brunner DONOR

Dated 1 March 1985
Frank S. Weyer

Accepted on behalf of the Civil Air Patrol by

Captain William Wasker

Dated 1 March 1985

CAP ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Number WNHC 21.85-1

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Mr. George L. Brunner

Date of Interview:

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Location:

Portland, Oregon

Conducted by:

Captain Helenmerie Walker, CAP
and
Captain Frank S. Myers, CAP

W. You are George L. Brunner?

G. Yes-

W. Where were you born?

G. Right here in Portland, Oregon.

W. And from a military background?

G. Right, my father was in two wars. One and Two.

W. Where did you get your first interest in aviation?

OREGON FLYERS

G: Well, it was quite a long time back, it was, I guess in 1925 or 1926. Around there someplace.. I originally tried to get into the Rankin Flying School -that was when it was out on Union Avenue and Columbia Boulevard,- I didn't have enough money. So, I had to wait. I waited until 1934 and I got into the Oregon Flyers and the Oregon Flyers made a deal with Ed Ball at Hillsboro- the Hillsboro Airport. And he trained all the people,- practically all the people, not quite all of them because Clarence Chadwick went to work for him, on weekends, and he did some of the instructing. But Ed Ball did the majority, the major part of it, and furnished the aircraft, that is if you can call a forty horse Cub an aircraft. It wouldn't get out of the way in a strong wind.

W: You mentioned The Oregon Flyers, now what are they?

G: Well, they were just a bunch of guys that got together, and decided that they wanted to learn to fly. And how to do it, and how to fly in Oregon, and how to accomplish this, so we found a Club, a flyer's club, and we made the deal with Ed Ball, for a price, for training. And it got to be going, and going, and going, and finally it got to be a pretty good-sized organization. And it was still going strong when the War started, you know, and the guys started going, one by one, here and there, and quite a group of us went either to San Benito or Laredo.

W: Well, prior to going to those places, was the Oregon Flyers, - now this was the Oregon Flyers, not the Oregon Sportsmen..

G: That's right. the Oregon Sportsmen was a different organization entirely.

M: Was the Oregon Flyers, were the pilots involved with Civil Defense?

CIVIL DEFENSE

G: Yes, they were, almost all the pilots were in Civil Defense, they were in both simultaneously. I was in both at the same time. The Oregon Flyers was originally just a pleasure organization, it started that way. That is, until later, when we saw that training would be a pretty good thing to come along. So we were in training along the Columbia River, making cross country trips, spotting what we saw along the way, observations, and potential- where would you go, what could happen, in a way it was a training

program for what ultimately, the Civil Air Patrol program did. It was a safety program for flyers. VFR flyers such as I was. Though if I say so myself, I was a DAM good pilot. I've been told that a good many times, I had an instrument rating, I had an instructor's rating, I had a Commercial license. And I used all three of them because at one time I had the airport at Oregon City.

W: Now, when you first joined Civil Air Patrol, you were a member of the Oregon Flyers..and did the majority of them join?

G: Yes.

W: Do you remember about when, and about where?

G: Well they all joined around Portland, well, it happened between 1941 and 1942. It was various stages when people went, a couple would go this week, and a couple would go next month..it was kind of piecemeal about going. When I went down there it was..when I got to Laredo, I believe there were five of us. Altogether. But there were already people there, you see. They hadn't been there very long, but they were there. But I couldn't say any definite date, except 1941 and 1942.

THE UNIFORMS

W: Now, when you were in Oregon Flyers, prior to Civil Air Patrol time, you wore uniforms, you met regularly. When you met, what did you do, then?

M: About the uniforms, I don't recall Oregon Flyers wearing uniforms.

G: Yes, they did.

M: What kind of uniforms, George?

G: They were this color, - khaki, and the hat, and the emblems, they were miniature emblems, but they were emblems.

M: Like this emblem on this bracelet, - with wings?

G: No, they were like officer ranks, like captains's bars, for rank.

M: Who was the commanding officer?

G: Well, I was telling Merle there, that Charlie Haas was one of the instigators, however, it was Skip Badley who did most of the organizing and the training and that kind of stuff. He did most of it, but we did have uniforms.

W: And then when you joined, - when you went into Civil Air Patrol, all you had to do was put your red epaulets on..

G: That's all. That's all we had to do.

W: When you first went into the Civil Air Patrol, then, you mentioned that you went to Laredo?

G: Yes, Laredo, Texas.

AT SOUTHERN LIAISON PATROL

W: How did you go, and what did you do there?

G: We went by BUS. The whole crew went by bus. And the day we arrived there, we arrived at night. They put us up in the Plaza

Hotel, which was one of the two nicest hotels in Laredo. Air Conditioning.. The next morning we went outside and the minute we stepped out the door it was one hundred and five. Now you can imagine what that could do to a person that had been in this country, in January, in February, and meet that right square in the face. I'm telling you, that hurt. Then, we went out to the Air Base. At that time there was an Air BASE at Laredo. We were there about two weeks, and we did flight training missions. That's exactly what we did, there on the Rio Grande. And going the other way, going East, we went out to the coast as far as Corpus Christi. Oh, no, not Corpus Christi. It was Point Isabel. We turned around at Point Isabel and came back, down the coast to San Benito, and refueled, and came back home. But, I kid you not, some of that flying was low enough, that you had to raise up, in order to make a turn, to keep from digging a wingtip. And I swore, they finally got down to where they wanted license plate numbers, off of a vehicle, and we figured the next step would be motor numbers, sure as hell..

W: Where did you stay, when you were there at Laredo?

HOUSING AT LAREDO

G: Well, what they did at Laredo, they took over a motor court, a motel. It wasn't very fancy, but it was dry, and warm, and they also served meals, but they charged us for them. We had to pay for our own meals. We didn't have to pay for.. well, I don't remember whether we did or not. Anyway, they had this motel, and most everybody stayed there. Hugh Yerke and I were real good friends and had been since we were kids. We had been raised in the same

neighborhood and had known each other all the time we lived in Portland. We decided it was just too darn noisy around that place. There was something going on all the time, you know, the motels they built at that time, there was just about this much distance between the rooms, so we moved to a place right in town, on Hidalgo Street, a room with kitchen, at attractive rates.

M: Is Hugh Yerke living?

G: No, he died two or three years ago, wasn't it about that time?

M: He was a good friend of mine, too.

G: You know, we were talking about that the other day, there was a guy who you thought would have lived forever. Big, husky, healthy looking. Judas Priest, he was healthy looking, - I don't know what caused his death, - we didn't find out.

W: There at Laredo now- you'd go out every morning at the Base, and you'd try your runs, weather permitting...

G: Well, you did if you were assigned. You weren't assigned every day.

ON DUTY - OFF DUTY

W: What did you do if you were not assigned?

G: You stayed there at the Base. You either, most of the time we exercised. We had a swimming pool that wasn't very far away. We went to the swimming pool and swam. We played baseball, and cards, you'd never know, you never knew, when someone would want you to go someplace, so you had to be there. And you couldn't

just sit there and twiddle your thumbs, so you had to do something. So for the most part, we flew most of the time. I would say offhand that out of seven days, we flew five. One way or the other, either up to Del Rio or down to Brownsville or San Benito. And that usually took about four hours, flight time.

W: Did you have a regular, what we would call an eight to five type duty?

FLIGHT SCHEDULES

G: That depended a lot on what you were doing. As far as piloting was concerned, yes, that was what you did have, except for the flights, they might stagger the hours for the flights, - if you had a late flight, you might come back late. You might be at the Base at eight o'clock in the morning and you might not get back until eight o'clock at night, because you would lay over, let's say at Del Rio, or at San Benito, you might lay over for two or three hours, and then come back. Other than that, the hours were pretty regular, for the most part.

W: What did you do in your spare time? Plug your ears up, Mrs. B.

R AND R

G: Well, as a matter of fact there wasn't much to do.. We went to a bullfight, over in Mexico, we went over to Mexico and horsed around with the Mexicans, and watched them be crazy. And they are crazy; believe me. And there wasn't- well, there was one moving picture in the town of Laredo, and it ran all day and night so you saw what you wanted to, and other than that there wasn't much of anything to do. You could spend your time on the Base just as well as you could anyplace else.

W: Well, now what kind of equipment did you have? What plane did you fly most of the time?

AIRCRAFT - The Good and Not so Good

G: I flew any airplane that was on the Base. Most of the ones we had down there, however, were Stinsons. And to me the Stinson is one of the most durable airplanes ever built. I have seen a lot of them crash, and I have yet to see one where the cabin part was completely smashed in. I have never seen one like that.

M: What model Stinson were those, George, SM-8s, SM-7s, Gullwings, or the little model 10-As.

G: I don't remember, they were small Stinsons, some had two tanks, some only one.

M: How about George Felt's?

G: No, not Felt's. down on the Border, the biggest plane on the Border was Frank Van Petten's Cessna.

M: The Airmaster..

G: Well, whatever it was, it had one of those chintzy engines that forgot to run once in awhile. It was fast, it was a fast airplane.

M: Let me remind you that there was a staggerwing Beech on the Border, too..

G: Yes, but not at Laredo.

M: Yes, that was out of El Paso.

G: And there were a couple of Wacos, down at San Benito.

M: Yes, I flew one down there from Idaho. Did you know Joe Harrell?

G: No, I don't recognize the name, anyway.

W: Did you carry any kind of armament?

ARMS AND THE MAN

G: Yes, we carried a sidearm, a 38 cal revolver, we were issued machine guns, never took them, they were too clumsy, but they were available. And shotguns.

W: Did you carry any bombs, with the planes?

G: Not in Laredo, - San Benito did, but not Laredo.

W: Any of the ground equipment, radios, this type of equipment, were you familiar at all with any of that?

THE RADIO ROOM

G: Well, from a use standpoint. And to be right honest about it, most of the aircraft themselves, had pretty fair radios, for that time. They weren't too bad. And our Base station, at Laredo, I don't know how those girls stood it. I just don't. That static was so horrible that it would just drive you crazy. Absolutely nuts. I don't know how they could take it. Frankly, I couldn't. I would walk in there to find out something, as I was Operations Officer, and Good Lord, I couldn't get out of there quick enough.

M: Do you remember the names of any of the girl operators?

G: No, there was one girl down there from Burns...no, from Bend.

M: Ruth Perry.

G: Ruth was her name. I couldn't remember her last name.

M: Yes. I know her. - I was best man at her wedding.

G: Well, is that right?

M: When you were there at Laredo, now, were you involved in any accidents? Or incidents?

THE WATERMELON PATCH

G: Yeh, I was. It was in that Porterfield. Put me down in a watermelon patch on a Mexican's rancho. And that watermelon patch wasn't a hell of a lot bigger than this room, either, to tell the truth. And it was really hysterical, to tell that story. It was Sumner Parker, he was flying and I was observing. He missed the first pass, and it was dropping a cylinder, very bad, but it did have enough to pick it back up and get it in the air. Of course, there were no hills around there, and on the second pass, he got it down. We strung out the radio antenna but couldn't raise anyone at the Base. We were the last patrol of the day, and normally there would be no other patrols go by. But one did go by, but he didn't see us. And so we knew that we were here for the night, that's for dam sure, but we did have K rations, so we had something to eat. And there were these two Mexican guys who lived on this ranch and outside they had a hip-high fireplace and they had, it looked like they had a dead rat they were cooking- barbecuing you know, on this fire. And so, they proceeded to eat,, and we proceeded to eat, so it got time to think about a place to sleep, so we got in the airplane, and we did until about four in the

morning, when it was getting to be daylight. And after we got up we had a little breakfast, and we got to watching these guys.

A CLOSE SHAVE ON THE BORDER

One of the funniest things I ever saw in my life,- one was going to shave.- had the bottom of a tin can, nailed- to a post, he had a regular paring knife, and he had a regular whetstone, and he had a bar of lava soap, making suds of it, you know. And scratch.. he'd holler, you could hear him for ten miles, every time he'd move, it was just like pulling'em out. Oh, Lord, that guy. I felt sorry for him.

LETTING THE CAT (Out of the Bag?)

But anyway, after they got that done, they decided they were going to feed the cat. The guy had a can of milk in his hand,- they had a cow out there in the corral, for milk. He opened the door, - and kerchoo- all you saw was a streak coming out of there, believe me. And that went straight to that corral, and in that corral there was a tree, and it went up the tree, And right behind that streak that went out there was a German shepherd dog and that dog just shot out there like nobody's business and he got that critter treed, and it wouldn't come down and they couldn't get in there. They finally got in there and got a collar on the dog. But they just held him long enough to let the cat get down, and the cat took off across country and the dog right behind it. And it went into a rat hole,- or a rabbit hole. One rear leg was sticking out. They jabbered to themselves - they laugh all the time, you know- they went and got a rope and put it around that back leg, but they didn't hang onto the dog. They pulled it out,

and here comes the dog right now, they're swinging the cat to keep it away from the dog. Constantly swinging the cat, - of the funniest things you ever saw. Well, they kept going back all the way until they could get in the door. They opened the door, and kachoo they got it inside, and well, it wasn't a cat it was a minx, it was a wildcat they'd tamed. Well, laugh! Parker and I laughed at those guys, it was really hysterical. That whole episode was really funny. That's the end of that story.

W: How'd you get the Porterfield out of the watermelon patch?

G: Well, the next day we decided where we were, and Hugh Yerke, damned if he didn't land an airplane in there. And he decided what was wrong. We couldn't get the radio to work out of there. But he got it out, - the field was right at the edge of the river bank, you see, and as he got it out it was just wobbling, but there was enough underneath it that he got it into the air. He was alone in it, he left his observer there. They got back to Base, and they called the Mexican garrison, and they got a Sargeant over there, that knew his country, and they had to go back clear to Del Rio, to get across the river. There are no roads around there - none at all. Just arroyos and gullies and whatever, but this Sargeant from the Garrison, he knew what he was doing because they took them right to us. And they had parts, it was a broken rocker arm - they put one on, and cut a little more brush, back a ways, and Parker flew it out. I went back by jeep. And on the way back, because we couldn't make it in one day - it was a two day trip - coming back. So we stopped at a... I knew it was a ranch, I guess. There was this house, but there was

no windows in this house, at all, none. But it was white as could be, it was painted just as white as anything you ever saw.

RANCHERO COFFEE

Next morning they got up, and cooked us breakfast and made coffee. You know how they made coffee down there? They put in the water and they put in the coffee and the milk, and boil the whole damn thing. Most horrible stuff you ever tasted in your life. But they were nice to us, anyway, they really were. By the next day, of course, we got back to the Base about five o'clock in the afternoon. And that's how the Porterfield got out of the watermelon patch. Parker flew it out of there.

OUT OF GAS

And I had another experience flying back from San Benito, with Harry Maughn. I don't think his name is on there anyplace. He was from over in Idaho, he was a car dealer. Chevrolet dealer, I recall. It was his airplane, too. And it had two tanks in it, that's what was the trouble. We were coming back, and you always flew low, you know, you didn't have any, - he had no cushion, and the damn thing sputtered and died. He'd forgot to switch tanks and he was so low, there wasn't time to start it up then, so he set it down. I flew it out, as he was pretty heavy, it wasn't much of a job; being a plowed field, and we tramped it down to use for a runway to get it off.

THE 'FRIENDLY FIRE' EPISODE

M: Were you around Laredo when Hewitt and Henderson got shot down?

G: I was Operations Officer.

M: You were Operations Officer- can you tell anything about that incident?

G: Yeh,- I don't know if I should or not.

M: Why not?

G: You know how they got shot down...

M: I heard a story about it, that it was a stray bullet from...

G: Stray bullet.- my butt! It was no stray bullet, hell, no they were just using us as target practise. Just some, a couple of wild jokers up there, and that's what happened.

M: Do you think civilians..?

G: No, it was military, absolutely. .50 caliber- we proved that. And that's what they were shooting. they were shooting .50 caliber shells and sure as I'm sitting here right now, that's what happened to those two fellows. They were good friends, I knew them very well. Henderson was from the East. But Hewitt was from Eugene. He had a real pretty wife, and she was nine months-eight months pregnant, about ready to have a child. A real pretty girl.

M: Did you ever hear what happened to that child?

G: No. I never did.

M: Did you ever hear anything about Harry Coffey setting up a trust fund, or the government aiding either his wife, or how about Henderson's wife?

G: No, I did not. I've never heard anything about them. The only thing I know is they were buried in the cemetery at Fort McIntosh. That's the only thing I know, - they had a military funeral for them. And they were buried at Fort McIntosh. And other than that I never heard anything at all. And that's what's so pitiful. After all that service, they won't even bury you. I know that's not asking for very much, I don't think. Maybe they think it is, but I don't. They didn't give anything else, no training, no goodies, no nothing, - that, I think, would be the very least, not that I can't afford to bury myself. I can, without any question, but that's not the point. It's not the money, it's just the idea.

W: How long were you there, . . at Laredo?

G: I was there from January 1942, 1943, - let's see, when did we go up to McChord, was it 1944? The War ended in '45, didn't it? I must have gone up there, to McChord, Ft. Lewis, in 1944.

TOW TARGET DUTY

M: Did you go with George Felt, at the same time, because we've got a statement from him about leaving Laredo and going to McChord, or did he go to San Diego? I'm not sure..

G: I'm not sure if he went at the same time or not, - I know he was there. But I don't recall whether we went at the same time, or whether we didn't.

W: How did you go, did you drive, or what, from Laredo?

G: I ferried an aircraft from Laredo to Burbank, and I took the

bus from Burbank to Portland.

M: Now, when you were up there, you were first at Fort Lewis..

G: That's right.

M: And did you- what is Tow Target? Tell me about it.

G: Well, they have two types. They have the sleeve type, that looks like a wind sock except it's got taper, and then they have the flag type that looks like a flag, horizontal. We towed both types, mostly sleeve type. In your aircraft you have a winch- an electric winch. There's four thousand feet of line on that winch. And you let that out,- like now, when we were towing over at Yakima, before those .50 cal guns over there, we were towing 1500 feet of line, and we towed at a low altitude. And their so-called safety position was straight up. When they are firing they don't bother you too much unless it is a dark day. On a dark day, every fifth one is a tracer, so you know how close they're coming to you. Anyway, this line, on the end of it they have what's called a fish, a tube, a plain tube, and there's a ring that comes down over it and a hook that trips, and this comes back up {demonstrating} so when you want to release it there is a weight that comes down and trips it. Sometimes that doesn't work, so you carry a pair of wire cutters, always.

CAUGHT BY A STUMP

One day over at Yakima, the range over there went uphill, and it had been timbered. Cut timbered, you know. and fortunately, very fortunately. I was flying a Stinson, with a 220 Continental in it, what they called the Detroiter,- a hell of a sturdy airplane.

We got up to the upper end and made the turn to come back and it got caught, the sleeve got caught around this stump, and there it was, I was flying a circle around this stump. I finally got the guy that was with me to cut the cable. That was all I could do. We were actually tethered to that stump and flying around in a circle. [Laughter] It wasn't funny, it actually happened.

W: Now there at Ft. Lewis, where did you stay?

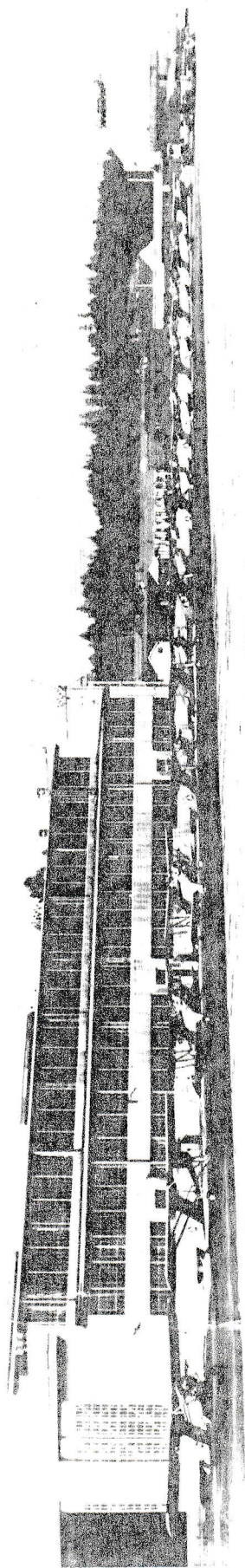
G: We had barracks right out at the field. We ate at the messhall, part of Ft. Lewis, but our billets were at the hangar. We would go over to Yakima for practice, and down to Fort Clatsop, and to that point on the North side of the Columbia River, where they had a six inch gun set up. We also towed at Fort Stevens on the Oregon side, but that was 40 mm.

W: Did you ever go to Boardman, Bend, Redmond?

G: Just for training exercises at Redmond, Bend. We also went for towing at Port Townsend, up by the Canadian border. We towed up there for 90 mm anti-aircraft guns. Both day and night. Those night flights got kind of interesting, too, believe me.

W: You literally flew planes, towing a target that live bullets was being shot at.

G: You betcha, and when 90 mm bullets exploded, you'd know it, because it went psht, and there was a big puff of black smoke, so you know where you are, they know how close they are to you. And we towed those flag targets for them. But at Fort Stevens they used the sleeve targets for the 40 mm guns.



NAMES OF TOW TARGET PERSONNEL
McChord- Ft. Lewis, Wash.

First Row, from Left:

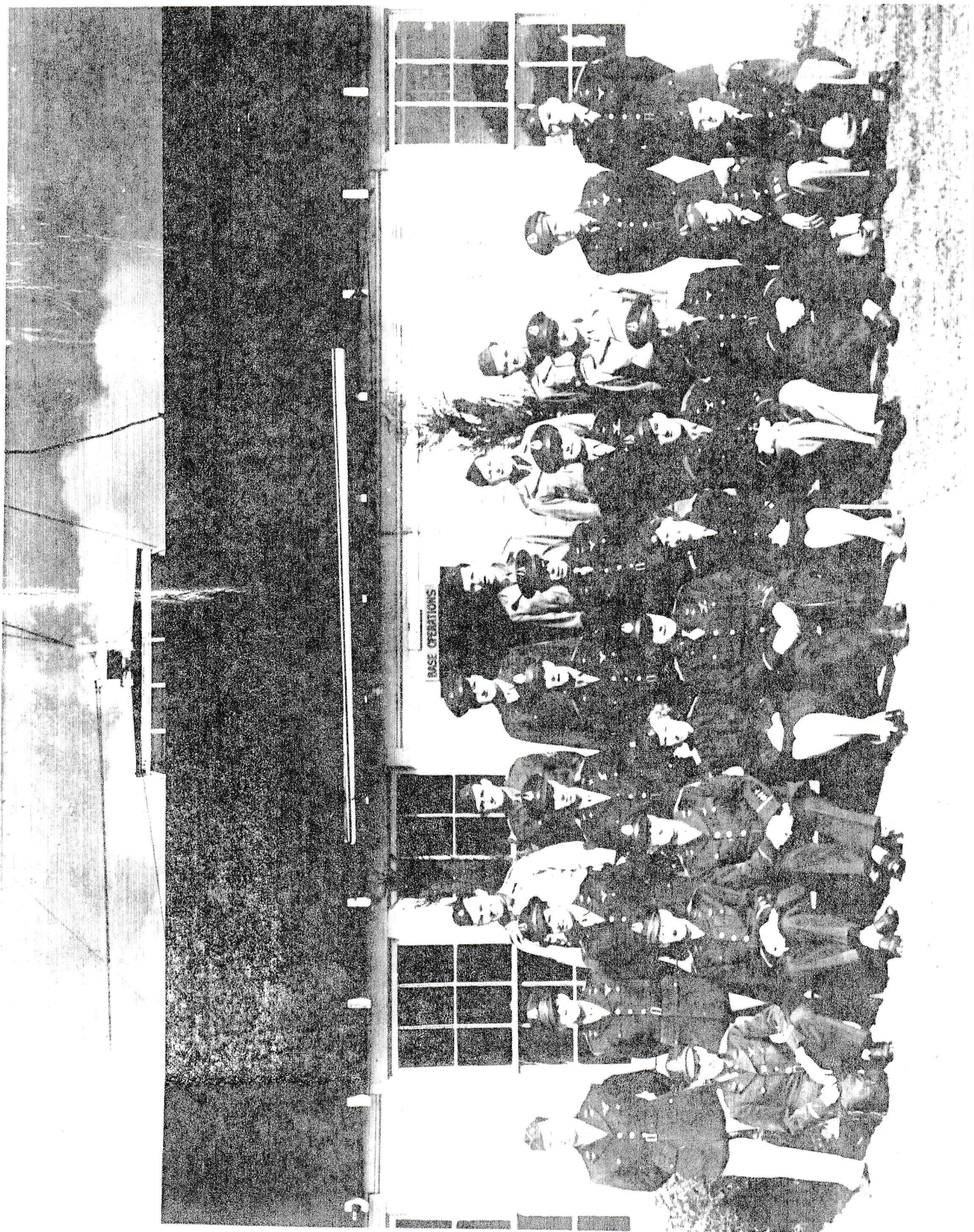
Miller Peterson, Racine, Wisc
B. Hand, Newton, Mass
Alton Marshall, Bar Harbor, Maine
S/Sgt Gladys Pier, Milwaukee, Wisc
Maj. B. King, C.O.
Sgt. Gladys M. Rosenbaum, Portland, Oreg
Capt. George Farr, Rockville Centre, N.Y.
1st Lt. A.P. Noedloff, Seattle, Wash
Cyril C. Bull, Eugene, Oreg
Harold Fritz Carter, Jr. Bar Harbor, Maine

Second Row:

Peter C. Romano, Fitchburg, Mass
Dave Farrethy, Woodstock, Vermont
Vincent M. Guilfoyle, N.Y.
??...
Capt. George H. Felt, Roseburg, Oreg
1st Lt. Albert O. Hinricks, Colville, Wash
Capt. Jim Rosenbaum, Portland, Oreg
??...
1st Lt. George Brunner, Portland, Oregon
Glen A. Eichelberger, Portland, Oregon

Third Row:

M/Sgt. G. M. ... Nebraska City, Nebraska
T/Sgt. Kenneth Fohnson, Box 24, Murphy, Oregon
S/Sgt. Arthur L. Bar Harbor, Maine
T/Sgt. John T. Dean, Spokane, Wash
M/Sgt. Michael Popovich, Waterbury, Conn
Sgt. Samuel W. Lancaster, South Carolina



W: Did any of them ever miss their target, and get you?

A PERFECT DROP

G: Nope, fortunately, they didn't. There was a kind of funny incident, we had an Operations Officer for the base that was on the Columbia. He was a kind of a comical guy. Now to get that target back you had to trip it at a certain spot. A particular place. And we were gabbing back and forth, and I said, look, buddy, you just point that gun straight up, and I'll drop the target right over the barrel, and do you know, by God, I did it! I don't know how I did it, but I did it. You know, you have a hole cut in the floor of the aircraft, and you can see.- at a certain spot you know when to release that leaded weight and normally it drops right where it is aimed, and this time I dropped it right over the barrel of that gun, just as sure as anything. He didn't think I could do it, and I didn't either.

M: You spoke of ferrying a plane to Burbank,-did you ferry any other aircraft?

G: Yes, I took an aircraft from McChord Field to Kansas City, Kansas.

M: What kind of a trip was that, any trouble with weather, gasoline supplies- where did you get your fuel, from Air Force Bases; Army Air Fields, or..

G: Army Air Fields, mostly.

M: With requisitions from the C A P ?

G: I didn't have any trouble getting fuel. I had one hell of a

time getting into Bozeman, Montana, tho.

M: How about ration tickets for your automobile, when you were driving?

G: I didn't have a car, so I wasn't driving, but when I was here, I got the same treatment that any other service man would get, for meat and milk and all that garbage,- gasoline and tires and one thing and another,- got all those.

M: You said you had a problem getting into Bozeman?

MONTANA SNOW STORM

G: I came from McChord Field to Portland. I stayed in Portland overnight and left the next morning and got to Spokane and it started to go sour. So I stopped and added fuel and they kept telling me it was getting bad. but it didn't look it. So I said, I'll try it, so I started and turned around three times but the fourth time I got quite aways along the line, and I figured what the hell, there's no sense going back now, so I got to Livingston, and you know the railroad track runs almost right thru the town of Livingston. Pretty near it, and I was flying right with the railroad- just about that high [motioning] too. But I finally got into a snowstorm, but finally got out of it and into Bozeman, and it was just as clear as could be, no problem whatsoever:

M: When you were at Laredo, did you ever borrow a car, or go down into Mexico with a friend,- down to Monterey or elsewhere?

TOURING MEXICO, WITH PETE THE COP

G: No, but I got down to Mexico City,-flew down there with

dignitaries. But I did get acquainted with a young man from Burbank, in fact I stayed at his house when I went to Burbank, and he was a guy whose parents had money just running out their ears.

M: Do you remember his name?

G: I can't tell you what it was,- he was a tall, thin fellow- he had a Lincoln and he had a wood and metal panel built in,- all aircraft instruments. He had his car there at Laredo, and he went home for a couple of weeks, and he said, go ahead and use it if you want to, I don't care, so I did. So then you go to Mexico and you could buy all the gasoline and all the booze you wanted to. They didn't have any restrictions on it, at all. And the price was way, way, way low. The best part of it was, you know you had to pay a tax on it, coming back. We got acquainted, at least Yerke and I did anyway, with Pete, the Cop. He was the Downtown Cop, he was always on the same corner. He was Habanera Pete. You know Habanera, you can cut it four times and it's still stronger than anything you could get here. Pete would go with us, in the car. Pete had to leave his gun at the border, at the immigration office. Pete would go and buy one bottle of Habanera, and he'd put five in the trunk, and he'd come back 'One bottle, that's all we got, one bottle'- they never checked, they NEVER asked, you never paid for anything if you could get out of it.

W: Mr Brunner, what did you do when you left McChord and the Tow Target?

AFTER THE WAR

G: I instructed flight training, out at Beaverton for a while, got acquainted with a guy that was interested in aviation and had a bit of money, and he bought 55 acres at the Oregon City golf course and we made an airport. I built an airport there. And I operated that until New Year's Day of 1951 and the Fire Department did one hellofa good job,- they saved all the land,- every bit of it.

THE SHORT SNORTER

W: Now Lieutenant Brunner, as you were at that time, you have here two dollar bills fastened together, what is that called?

G: A Short Snorter.

W: Why is it called a Short Snorter?

G: I'll be damned if I can tell you. I don't know. All I can tell you, if you were caught without it, at least in Laredo, you were subject to a ten dollar fine. That's all I know about it, that's really all I know about it, except for keeping track of people, and their names.

M: Well, as I recall, the way it worked, if you were at the bar, and you were short that,- you had to buy everybody at the bar, a drink. Maybe that was the original concept of it. And I notice that you have quite a few pilot's names, signatures, followed by a number,- what's that number?

G: Well, that's the pilot's license number, and many of them are real low numbers. I originally had a very low number, and then

when I got my commercial license and instrument rating and instructor's rating I had a new license issued which was higher, it is 134250, six digits, where before it was way down because it was 1935 when I first got a license.

M: What was your CAP serial number, do you recall?

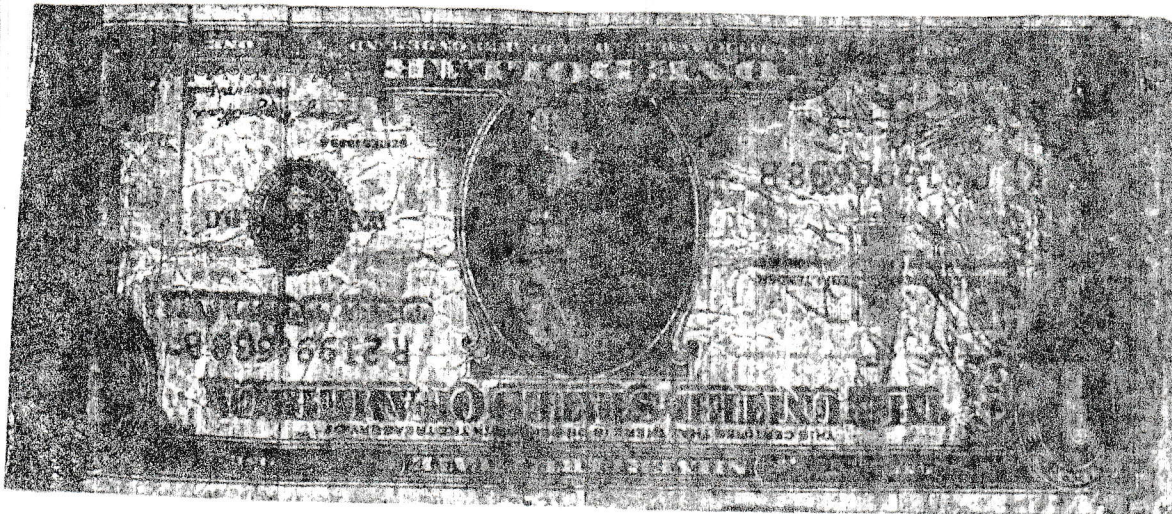
G: It's on that certificate, -

W: Yes, there it is, '9-2-48'

M: George, thank you very much.. Merle will decipher the names and numbers on the Short Snorter, and we will get this back to you for your editing, when transcribed.

END

Front of the Short Snorter with as many decipherable signatures as possible



F.O. Brunner 134250
San Benito, Texas 2-26
Lt A.C. Oosterveer 21468
John Stipling P-3089
F.O. H.W. Thomason 257-59
Hugo Yerke
Ruth Perry
O.A. Donaldson
Glen Eichelberger
Larry Gilbertson
Ralph Perrin
Harry Hewitt
H.M. Maughan

Robert Hawes
William E. Lees Jr. 27652
Arnie Morgan 86078
O.B. Gill 44858
Ernest A. Ball
Bill Lee 272289
Chuck Boyd P-67766
Rosemary Molena
Helen Molena
Herb Dittmer
Bette L. Smith

The signatures were more legible on the back



Lt A.M. Fredriksen 55176
Roger Klass
Wm E. Scott 275 606
Vessie (Bessie?) Olson
Laura May Brunton ex-P-30757-C-37957
Loreen M. Johnson
Stuart Rose
Spencer W. Shaw
Lt G.K. Coburn
E. Cummings
G.A. Turner
Jim Rosenbaum
John Walker

G.M. Buchanan 167988
Dave Farrelly
W.S. Cooper
John L. Hart
Rex Sullivan
Alda M. Sadow C-86056
Malcom H. Perona
Glendon Dotson
Flt Off ----
Jerry Nyman
Jack Moore
Herman E. Martin
Y. Dunsmoor

CAP HISTORICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

I. SUBJECT

- A. Name: GEORGE L. BRUNNER
- B. Address: 12420 SE 23 AVE MILWAUKEE
- C. Telephone Number: 654 3450
- D. Current CAP Status: Retired

II. WWII CAP ACTIVE DUTY ASSIGNMENT(S)

- A. Type: Coastal Patrol (), Southern Frontier Liaison Patrol (☒)
Courier Service (), Tow Target (☒) , Other (), (specify)
NOTE: Check type of active duty performed.

- B. Location: La Rado Toxas
- C. Period of time: 1942-1945
- D. Age at time of service: 30
- E. General description of duties: Pilot

III. REGARDING LOCATION

- A. Designation: _____
- B. Where located: _____
- C. Number of aircraft: _____
- D. Number of personnel: _____
- E. Housing facilities: _____

IV SPECIAL INCIDENTS

- A. Were you involved in any special incidents such as aircraft accidents, spotting of submarines, dropping of bombs, special missions, etc. _____
- B. If the answer to A is yes, please describe _____

V. GENERAL

- A. Was a history published on your units operation? No If yes do you have a copy of it or know where it can be reviewed? _____

- B. Are you willing to make yourself available for an Oral History Interview requiring about 2 hours to record your personal point of view of your activities? Yes (X) No ()
- C. Other suggested contacts: _____

- D. Do you have any records, photographs, uniforms, insignia, etc. that you are willing to donate to CAP for historical research purposes? No
 If yes, please describe _____
